

Message Text

SECRET

PAGE 01 TEL AV 02782 011627Z
ACTION NODS-00

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 /001 W
-----075905 011700Z /43

O 011504Z MAR 78
FM AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV
TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 1582
INFO AMEMBASSY AMMAN
AMEMBASSY CAIRO IMMEDIATE
AMEMBASSY DAMASCUS
AMEMBASSY JIDDA
AMCONSUL JERUSALEM IMMEDIATE

S E C R E T TEL AVIV 2782

EXDIS DISTRIBUTE AS NODIS

JERUSALEM FOR ATHERTON DEL

E.O.11652: GDS
TAGS: PEPR, US, XF, IS
SUBJ: PERCEPTIONS OF THE BEGIN VISIT

REF: STATE 51239

1. SOME THIRTEEN DAYS BEFORE HIS WASHINGTON TALKS START, NEITHER BEGIN NOR THE ISRAELI PUBLIC ATTRIBUTE "CLIMACTIC IMPORTANCE" TO THE PRIME MINISTER'S UPCOMING VISIT WITH RESPECT TO THE PEACE PROCESS, BUT IS IS VIEWED AS AN EXTREMELY IMPORTANT EVENT IN U.S.-ISRAELI RELATIONS. AT THIS STAGE, BEGIN VIEWS THE VISIT PRIMARILY AS AN OPPORTUNITY TO "STRAIGHTEN OUT MISUNDERSTANDINGS" WHICH HAVE ARISEN THROUGH NO FAULT OF HIS AND TO GET BACK ON THE TRACKS HIS RELATIONSHIP WITH THE PRESIDENT AND WITH KEY OPINION LEADERS. AS FOR THE PUBLIC, IT HAS BEEN SOMEWHAT DISTRACTED BY THE AIRCRAFT PACKAGE IN ITS CONTINUING EVALUATION OF US-ISRAELI RELATIONS. AS A RESULT, THE CONCERN

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THAT HAD BEGUN TO SURFACE OVER THE GOVERNMENT'S INEPT HANDLING OF THE SETTLEMENTS ISSUE HAS LARGELY GIVEN WAY TO THE OLD SELF-RIGHTEOUSNESS BASED ON SECURITY ARGUMENTS.

2. THIS HAVING BEEN SAID, WE WISH TO HOLD OFF ON ANY MORE DETAILED DEFINITIVE ASSESSMENT UNTIL AFTER ATHERTON COMPLETES HIS NEXT ROUND OF CONVERSATIONS

HERE (MARCH 1-3). AS THE DEPARTMENT HAS ALREADY SUGGESTED, THE RIGHT ORAL MESSAGE FROM SADAT COULD HAVE A VERY SIGNIFICANT IMPACT ON BEGIN'S THINKING AND ON THE WAY HE VIEWS (AND PREPARES FOR) HIS WASHINGTON VISIT. SO WILL "THE WRONG MESSAGE." THE SAME IS TRUE FOR PUBLIC ATTITUDES SHOULD THE SADAT MESSAGE SEE THE LIGHT OF DAY.

3. WE WILL OF COURSE BE SENDING YOU ANALYSES OF VARIOUS ASPECTS OF THE LOCAL SCENE IN GOOD TIME FOR THE PREPARATION OF MATERIALS FOR THE VISIT. SPECIFICALLY, YOU CAN EXPECT TO RECEIVE A SURVEY OF THE BEGIN GOVERNMENT'S FIRST EIGHT MONTHS IN OFFICE, A STUDY OF WEIZMAN AND HIS PROSPECTS, A FORECAST OF POSSIBLE IMPLICATIONS OF A BREAKDOWN IN NEGOTIATIONS, AND SOME FURTHER THOUGHTS ON BEGIN THE NEGOTIATOR.
LEWIS

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NNN

Message Attributes

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Draft Date: 01 mar 1978
Decaption Date: 01 jan 1960
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Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Case Number: n/a
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TAGS: PEPR, OVIP, IS, XF, US, (BEGIN, MENACHEM)
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